

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated November 12, 2009. Claims 1-19 remain pending in this application, of which Claims 1, 11, and 14, are in independent form. Claim 1 has been amended to address a formal typographical matter. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication that Claims 11-19 include allowable subject matter and that Claims 8-10 would be allowable if rewritten in proper independent form. The latter claims have not been so rewritten at this time, because for the reasons given below, their base claims are believed to be allowable.

The Office Action objected to the drawings for allegedly not including a "receiver". Applicant submits a set of four (4) Replacement Sheets of drawings to replace the drawings currently on file. In Sheet 4, new Figs. 5 and 6 are included. Support for Figs. 5 and 6 may be found at pages 10 and 11 of the specification. Applicant has made corresponding amendments to the specification to describe the receivers 100-1 to 100-4, 200-1, and 200-2 shown in Figs. 5 and 6. It is believed that the objection to the drawings has been remedied, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested. Applicant submits that no new matter has been added.

Claim 1 was objected to for informalities. The recitation "contol" in line 1 of Claim 1 has been changed to read --control--. It is believed that the objection to the Claim 1 has been remedied, and its withdrawal is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over European Patent No. 0940904 (Khellaf). Applicant respectfully traverses the

rejections and submits that the claims are distinguishable from the cited reference for at least the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is directed to a control system for a plurality of lamp-operating devices that are arranged in a distributed manner. The system includes at least one control station, a control line which connects the control station to each lamp-operating device, and a receiver that is allocated to each lamp-operating device. The receiver is provided for the purposes of communication with the control station, with each lamp-operating device belonging to a first or a second type and with it being possible to join together lamp-operating devices of the first and of the second type to form functional couples. The lamp-operating devices of the first type are configured and connected to the lamp-operating device of the second type, respectively allocated to them, in such a way that they can selectively activate or deactivate the lamp-operating device of the second type in accordance with a request of the control station.

Among other features of Claim 1 are the control station and the receiver provided for the purposes of communication with the control station, with each lamp-operating device belonging to a first or a second type and with it being possible to join together lamp-operating devices of the first and of the second type to form functional couples. An example of the formation of a functional couple is described at page 11, lines 23-34, referring to Fig. 1.^{1/}

^{1/} It is to be understood that the scope of the claims is not limited by the details of this or any other example that may be referred to.

Applicant respectfully traverses the characterization of Khellaf presented in the Office Action. In contrast to what the Office Action asserts, Applicant submits that Khellaf does not teach or suggest lamp operating devices (e.g., ballasts) of two different types. At page 3, paragraph 5, the Office Action states that Khellaf “discloses the claimed invention including at least one control station 14 a control line which connects the control station to each lamp-operating device, each lamp-operating device belonging to a first or a second type 40, 30”, and refers to Figs. 1, 2, and 4, and paragraphs [0019]-[0025], [0055]-[0065], [0071]-[0072] of Khellaf as support. Moreover, the Office Action concedes that Khellaf does not explicitly disclose a receiver for each lamp operating device.

Khellaf relates to a testing device 40 (conversion circuit) that is formed to (1) break the supply lines of an emergency luminaire (including operating device) 30 for testing purposes, and (2) to monitor the cycle of battery power of the allocated luminaire 30. Even if devices 30 and 40 are deemed to comprise a functional couple, the testing device 40 lacks the feature of being formed to operate a lamp 34 (Khellaf, Fig. 2).

Moreover, as conceded at page 3 of the Office Action, the luminaire 30 lacks the feature of a receiver to communicate with a control station. Nevertheless, the Office Action argues that the network controller (reference number 22) of Khellaf could be seen as the receiver recited in Claim 1. However, Khellaf’s network controller 22 is used for communication among several central control units 14, and not between a control station and a receiver that is allocated to each lamp-operating device, as recited in Claim 1. See, e.g., Khellaf at paragraph [0022].

Nothing has been found in Khellaf that teaches or suggests having a receiver that is allocated to each lamp-operating device and is provided for the purposes of communication with the control station. Indeed, Khellaf does not teach or suggest communication between both the testing device 40 and the luminaire 30 and the control unit 14 (i.e., control station). Even if the testing device 40 was allocated to the luminaire 30, as proposed in the Office Action, it would be unnecessary to provide the luminaire 30 with a receiver enabling communication with a control station. For testing purposes, which appears to be the only purpose of the Khellaf system as implied by paragraph [0064], there would be no motivation to provide both the luminaire 30 and the testing device 40 with a receiver, because communication is provided by the testing device 40. In view of this, providing the luminaire with a receiver implies the connection to another control system to operate the luminaire 30 remotely. However, nothing in Khellaf teaches or suggests further providing the luminaire 30 with such a receiver capable of communicating with a control station.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 1 is clearly allowable over Khellaf.

The other rejected claims in this application depend from Claim 1, discussed above, and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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